

## Use of Electrical Shock in Nonhuman Research: A Survey of *JEAB* Studies

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A recent analysis of a selected portion of the nonhuman research literature by Coile and Miller (1984) has found no evidence of animal abuse by psychologists. Furthermore, only 10% of the studies surveyed used electric shock in the anal-

ysis of behavior and, in most instances, the shock intensity was mild. In view of these findings, one might argue that studies using aversive control are infrequent today (see Cunningham, 1984). This conclusion, though, can be challenged because data were only reported for studies published in APA journals. The results of the present survey are provided in order to extend the Coile and Miller (1984) findings about the use of electric shock

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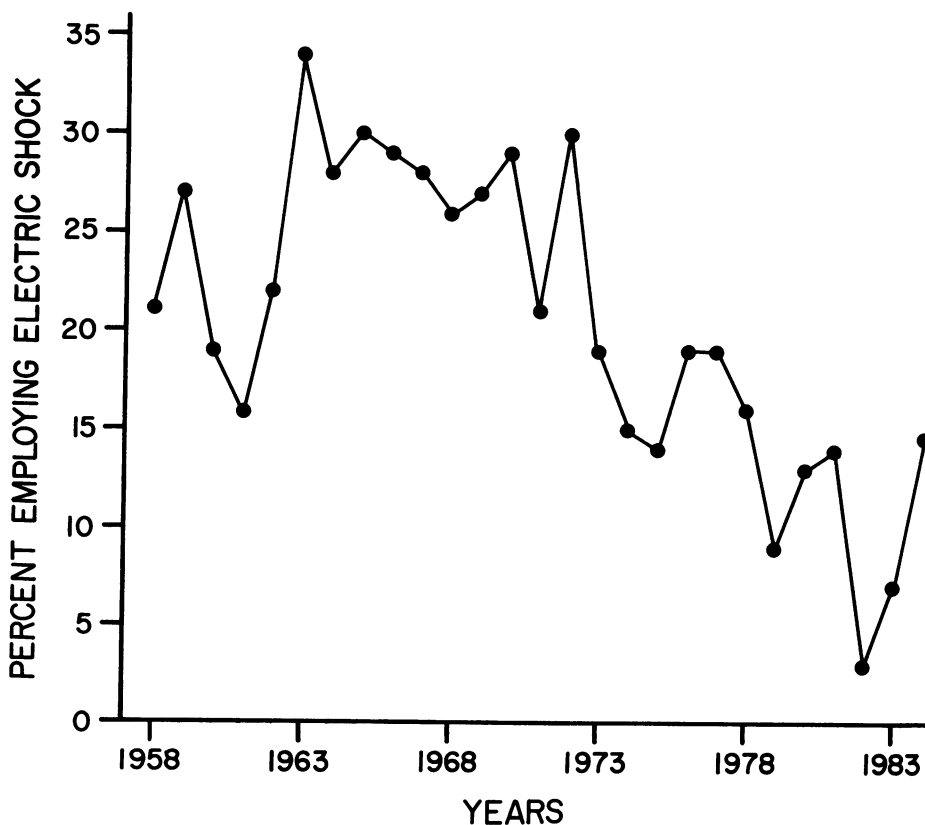


Figure 1. Percent of total studies published in *JEAB* in which electric shock, other than positively reinforcing brain stimulation, was employed with nonhuman subjects.

in nonhuman research as reported in one basic research journal not published by APA—the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB)*.

All studies published in *JEAB* from 1958, the year of the journal's inception, through 1984, the most recent complete year of publication, were surveyed. All studies using electric shock as a stimulus to alter behavior, not including electric brain shock as a positive reinforcer, were counted. Findings are expressed in Figure 1 as the percentage of studies using shock relative to the total number of studies reported in each year. The data indicate a gradual increase in the relative number of studies using shock from 22% in 1958 to 34% in 1963. The percentage then decreased from 1963 through 1984.

The present data are similar to those reported by Coile and Miller (1984) and generally support the conclusion that the frequency of electric shock use in nonhuman research has decreased dramatically over time. These data also testify to the minimal, albeit nonzero, use of electric shock in psychological research with nonhumans.

## REFERENCES

- Coile, D. C., & Miller, N. E. (1984). How radical animal activists try to mislead humane people. *American Psychologist*, 39, 700–701.
- Cunningham, S. (1984). Animal issues explored peacefully. *APA Monitor*, 15(10), 1, 14.